FLAGFINDER™ 1.0
USERS MANUAL

30 November 1994

1.   INTRODUCTION

FlagFinder™ 1.0 is an application to locate countries whose flag's appearance is known. To find a specific country, you specify the appearance of its flag in terms of its colors, stripes, and any patterns (e.g., stars, crescents, Union Jacks, etc.) in the flag. If there is more than one flag matching your selection, a list of countries is displayed. By scrolling and clicking down the list, you can easily and rapidly see each country's flag in turn to determine the matching flag.

FlagFinder was created because my son, Benjamin, developed an intense interest in countries and their flags. Upon seeing a flag, he immediately wants to know what country the flag represents. I found that, even if I know what the flag looks like, it is tedious to determine its country. To determine the country means looking through an alphabetic or geographic list of countries and visually comparing each country's flag with the one I want to know. As there are almost 200 countries, this means on average looking at 100 flags, which is tedious and time-consuming. I devised FlagFinder to provide a quick answer.

FlagFinder has a simple, intuitive user interface. Although section 2 below describes how to operate FlagFinder, it is easier to learn by trying than to read the description below. FlagFinder is also very quick and is able to search almost 200 countries for any selection of colors, stripes, and patterns in the blink of an eye.

The flags displayed in FlagFinder are usually "state" flags. These are the national flags flown on land by official organizations of the country. Where the state flags differ from "civil" flags, the state flags normally carry the national coat of arms.

FlagFinder 1.0 is shareware. If you use it for more than two weeks, I request that you send me a check for $10 to Don Brabston, 598 36th Street, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. Even if you don't use it for more than two weeks or don't send the shareware fee, please let me know (by mail or E-Mail to Dbrabst@AOL.com) whether FlagFinder is useful, how you like it, and if you have any suggestions for future improvements.

2.   USER INTERFACE

The FlagFinder user interface is simple and intuitive. The user interface has one screen, shown in Figure 1. The top portion of the screen is used for selection of flags, the middle portion contains the action buttons

and the count of countries found, and the bottom portion is used for display of countries and the selected country's flag. In the example in Figure 1, the user has asked for all countries whose have only the colors red, white, and blue, and also have stars in the flag. Ten countries were found whose flags satisfy those selection criteria. The countries are listed in the scroll box at the lower left; the first few countries are the United States, Australia, Chile, ... Once the user has selected Australia and double-clicked on it (or clicked once on Australia and then clicked the Show button), FlagFinder displays the Australian flag in the lower right of the screen.
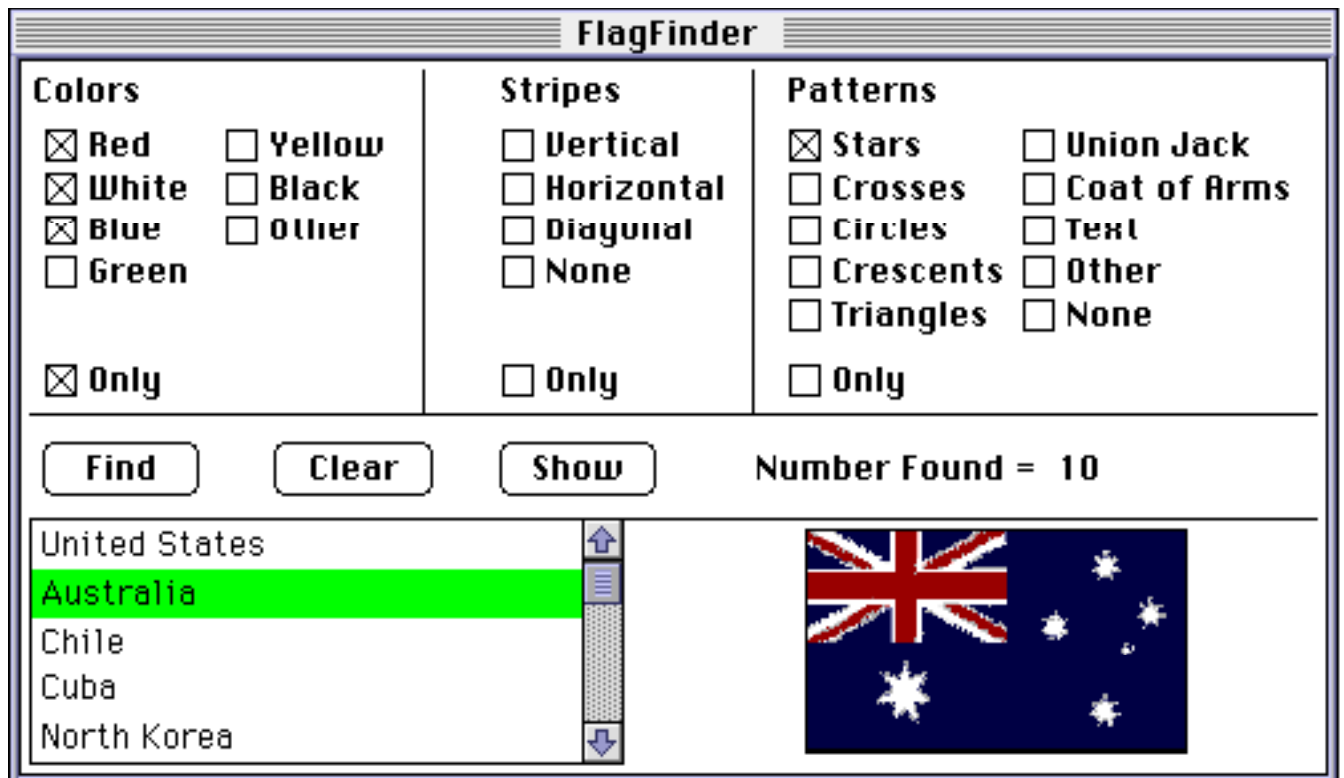

Figure 1.   FlagFinder Sample Screen

2.1   Specifying Selection Criteria

The top portion of the screen is divided into three sections. The leftmost section is labelled *Colors* and is used to select flags with the desired colors (e.g., Red, White, Blue, etc.). If the *Other* box is checked, only countries containing colors other than Red, White, ... will be selected. (For example, if the *Red, Blue,* and*Other* boxes are checked, a flag with red, blue, and green only would not be selected, whereas a flag with red, blue, green, and brown would be selected.) If the *Only* box is checked, countries

selected will contain <u>only</u> those colors checked. If the *Only* box is not checked, countries selected will contain <u>at least</u> those colors checked.

The middle section of the top portion of the screen is labelled *Stripes* and is used to select flags with the desired type of stripes (i.e., horizontal, vertical, or diagonal). If the desired flag has no stripes (e.g., the flag of Albania), check the *None* box. (Union Jacks and crosses do not count as stripes. If both a type of stripe and the *None* box are checked, the type of stripe is ignored.) Several flags have both horizontal and vertical stripes; if only flags with horizontal stripes are to be selected, check the *Only* box in addition to the *Horizontal* box.

The right section of the top portion of the screen is labelled *Patterns* and is used to select flags with patterns other than stripes. Check the types of patterns (e.g., crescents, stars) in the desired flag. If more than one type of pattern is checked, only flags with all patterns checked will be selected. (For example, checking only the *Crescents* box will give the flag of the Maldives, whereas checking both the *Crescents* and *Stars* boxes will not select the Maldives whose flag has no stars.) If flags having only the patterns checked are desired, check the *Only* box as well. (Patterns are probably the most difficult selection criteria since, for example, what appears to me as a coat of arms may not appear as such to the user. Try various combinations of patterns, for example, trying *Other* instead of *Coat of Arms*. *Text* is writing in any language; for example, the flag of Saudi Arabia has writing in Arabic.)

2.2   Finding Countries and Displaying Flags

The bottom portion contains a list box of all countries found and a picture of the flag of the country currently selected in the list box. The middle portion of the screen contains three buttons. When the selection criteria are specified, clicking the *Find* button finds all flags meeting the selection criteria. The *Clear* button clears the country and flag displays and all of the selection criteria. (The *Clear* button need not be used between successive finds. Use the *Clear* button when you want to start over with a completely different set of selection criteria.) The *Show* button is used to show the flag of the country selected in the list box in the lower left section of the screen. (Double clicking on a country in the list box will also display the country's flag. Double clicking is usually more convenient than selecting a country (e.g., with the mouse or arrow keys) and then clicking the *Show* button, but either method will work.)

2.3   Examples

A few examples are presented here as selection questions and answers. For the less obvious questions, the selection method is also given as an explanation.

a. Q: How many countries are represented in total? A: clear the selection criteria and click *Find*. This will select all flags with any combination of colors, stripes, and patterns; in other words, all flags will be selected. There are 195 countries represented in FlagFinder. The actual number of flags with pictures is slightly smaller.

b. Q: How many countries have flags with only red, white, and blue, horizontal stripes, and stars? A: 3.

c. Q: How many countries have crescents, but no stars? A: Do two selections: first with both *Crescents* and *Stars* checked and second with Crescents checked (and Stars unchecked). The first selection yields 10 countries, and the second yields 12 countries. Hence, there are two (12 minus 10) countries which have crescents and no stars.

d. Q: How many countries have the color red? A: 144 of the total 195 flags have the color red.

e. Q: How many countries have none of the colors red, white, blue, green, yellow, or black? A: Check the *Other* and *Only* boxes under *Colors* to see that there are no flags without any of these colors.

3.   INSTALLATION

To install FlagFinder, just copy the application and the document *Countries* to your hard disk. To launch FlagFinder, just double click on it. To quit FlagFinder, select Quit from the File menu or type ⌘Q.

4.   FUTURE PLANS

This section is a "wish list" - things I have not done, but will or may do at some time in the future. Clearly, fixing any remaining bugs (if I find them or you do and let me know) in the program (or documentation) will take precedence, but the wish list contains items which I hope to find time to do. If there are other items you wish to see added, or items on this list you do not believe deserve any effort, please let me know. These items are in no particular order, so let me know if you have a preference.

1.   Compress the flag pictures to reduce the size of the application.

2. Add the capability to show full-size flags and copy them to the clipboard for use in other applications.

3. Display the flags with the proper aspect ratio (i.e., correct length to height ratio). Almost all flags are now sized the same, whereas the actual flags have different aspect ratios.

4. Place a description of each flag in a text box on the screen or allow the user to display it in a pop-up dialog box.

5. Place information about each country in a text box on the screen or allow the user to display it in a pop-up dialog box.

6. Display a small map of each country showing its location relative to other countries.

If you have any questions or problems, write or phone me at:

Don Brabston
598 36th Street
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
(310) 545-5924

My America OnLine username is Dbrabst if you want to mail me comments or you can e-mail me via the Internet at Dbrabst@AOL.com. Good luck and let me know if this program is worth improving (other than for myself and my son). Thanks.